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made in three recent summers. The islands result from the deep dissection and submergence of a great volcanic mass, whose nearly level lava beds determine the tables and cliffs which dominate the scenery. The exposed coasts are cut back into great sea cliffs, some of which rise 1,500 to 2,400 above the sea, exposing magnificent structural sections. Huge outstanding stacks remain in front of many cliffs.

The outer islands are reached only in fair weather and then with difficulty; their small population often being storm bound for weeks at a time. Sea birds, nestling on the cliffs, constitute an important article of food supply; the 'bird rocks' forming valuable property for the parishes to which they belong. Here the hardy custom of bird catching, while dangling from a rope let down from the cliff top, is still in practice. 'Tidal whirlpools' occur in the inner fiords; some have a diameter of thirty yards; their smooth surface, bordered by a rippling cascade, standing half a foot above the surrounding water.

#### MOUNTAIN WASTE IN RELATION TO LIFE AND MAN.

AMONG the *Anthropogeographische Beiträge*, edited by Ratzel (Wiss. Veröffentlichungen, Ver. f. Erdk., Leipzig, ii, 1895), is an essay by Bargmann on the forms assumed by the youngest waste building talus slopes and fans on the flanks of the northern Kalkalpen, in their relations to mountains, snow, water, plants and mankind. Various forms assumed by the waste are minutely classified. The already large area covered by waste slopes is shown to be increasing, while the naked rock area is decreasing; thus the opportunity for occupation of the mountain district by various forms of life is on the whole improving. Yet in the present phase of degradation, the modern invasion of meadows by the advancing foot of waste slopes has in a number of cases seriously

reduced the value of the valley floors as pasture grounds. Some slopes of loose waste descend at angles of 44 and 46 degrees. The chapter on the manner in which waste slopes are taken possession of by plants is an excellent illustration of the relation of physiography to botany. W. M. DAVIS.

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#### CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY.

##### WAS SYPHILIS A GIFT FROM THE AMERICAN RACE?

No doubt there is a racial nosology as well as physiology. Many writers have asserted that syphilis originated in America and was first introduced into Europe by the sailors of Columbus. Dr. Joseph Jones claims to have unearthed bones showing syphilitic caries from the ancient graves of Tennessee. In the *Journal of Cutaneous Diseases*, October, 1895, Dr. A. S. Ashmead argues that syphilis was autochthonous among the Aymaras of Bolivia, and quotes Forbes as to the possible origin of it from the alpaca, an animal which suffers from it in a malignant form. Dr. E. Seler, in the *Verhandlungen* of the Berlin Anthropological Society for 1895, has a learned article to support the view that it was prevalent in Mexico before the conquest.

On the other hand, in the same volume, (p. 454), Prof. Virchow declares he never saw a syphilitic bone from an ancient American grave; that the disease was known in Europe certainly as early as 1472, and was prevalent in Japan in the ninth century.

#### ETHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY.

THE relations of these three sciences are discussed by T. H. Achelis in the *Globus* 1896, No. 4. He regards ethnology as a strictly empirical study, 'wholly without metaphysical tendencies.' Its ultimate aim is to define the human soul by a thorough collation of all that it has actually achieved,

as in religion, mythology, law, art, etc. In primitive conditions man's activities are powerfully influenced by his geographic environment, but this diminishes as culture increases. The proper aim of ethnography is not to search out relations of blood, but similarities of culture. Above these stand the universal traits of human psychology, which can be defined only by careful collection and comparison of ethnic details. Degenerations and deteriorations in culture do not belong of right to ethnologic study, because this has as its purpose the definition of evolution or the advancement of the species. He refers to Post, Bastian, Ratzel and Andree as the best representatives of this new school of ethnology.

It is proper to add that their opinions have not yet received universal, scarcely general, acceptance from other nations.

#### MENTAL VERSUS PHYSICAL IN WOMAN.

THERE is a prevailing impression that women in the higher classes of civilized society are less desirous and less capable of having numerous offspring than those of the lower classes and ruder conditions. In other words, that there is an antagonism between the intellectual culture of woman and her reproductive powers. One or the other must suffer in her education.

The sociological importance of such a fact, if it is one, can scarcely be over-estimated. Were it proved, and no remedy be found, it would mean the gradual extinction of the most cultured classes in the community. The question was presented by me before the anthropological section of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and an abstract published in the *Medical News*, January 18, 1896, under the title 'The Relations of Race and Culture to Degenerations of the Reproductive Organs and Functions in Woman.' I shall be glad to send a copy to any reader of SCIENCE who wishes one.

D. G. BRINTON.

#### NOTES ON AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE. (IV.)

##### TREATMENT OF PEACH ROT AND APPLE SCAB.

DELAWARE is a small State, but large in its peach industry. The leading enemy to the peach crop, the fruit rot, naturally is a subject that demands the attention of the Station Mycologist, Prof. F. D. Chester. For several years he has been testing various fungicides for the rotting of the fruit, and the last bulletin (No. 29), recently issued, gives both the results of the experiments and general directions for spraying. It is recommended to remove and burn all dried or mummified fruit from the peach trees in winter and to spray the trees in early spring with bluestone solution. When the fruit buds begin to swell spray with the Bordeaux mixture and again just before the buds open. Spray again with Bordeaux when the bloom is falling, and add a little Paris green to keep off the curculio. About two weeks later the same treatment is repeated. As the Bordeaux coats the fruit with the lime mixture, for the last two sprayings copper acetate, a colorless solution, is employed. A tenfold increase of sound fruit was obtained by this process at a cost of about twelve cents per tree.

The treatment for apple scab was the Bordeaux mixture, to which London Purple had been added and applied five times to the trees. The good fruit was doubled by this treatment, while the general health of the apple trees was much improved.

##### LEGISLATION AGAINST WEEDS.

THE division of Botany U. S. Department of Agriculture has just issued a bulletin (No. 17), prepared by Mr. L. H. Dewey, "in response to a growing demand among agriculturists and Legislators for data which will enable them to prepare laws better adopted for the control of weeds than those now in use." One per cent. of increase in